

The Toper's Reward for Eloquence.

BY ANGUS NICHOLSON.

After spending the gaudy, babbling and remorseless day in the industrious pursuit of the illusive highball and disporting for a few hours under the hazy glimmer of Jim's ornate calceus, the reveler wafted his way, assisted by a genial and sympathetic compeer, into the moist and rejuvenating confines of the Turkish bath. The design of his friend was to have the acute alcoholic saturation expurged from the highballic corporeality of his charge. This curative process for the regeneration of a temporary toper is not a new one, but when systematically followed the effectiveness of it can never be questioned save by a hopeless and irretrievable pessimist.

The man with the parcel was inaugurated into the humid atmosphere of the Turkish room when the city and county building clock was rendering a dismal requiem indicating that it was 8 o'clock. If the tolling of the pondrous bell had sent the temporary toper into an eternal siesta, the ringed, rheumatic and spavined coterie who afterward listened to his voluminous ravings would have greeted the event with salvos of applause. Two hours later the T. T. awoke and looked around with wondering and inquisitiveness eagerness. Also there was harbored in his chest an imitation of volcanic eruptiveness and intense tropicality which could have made the late torrid display on the island of Martinique look like a Fourth of July celebration in Malad. Be it whispered with melancholic solemnity that in the meantime the bosom friend of the T. T. had evacuated the apartments, taking with him all his amigo's worldly wealth and leaving graphic instructions, that the T. T. should not be favored with an alcoholic libation, however vociferous his demands might become.

"Give me a little drink, old man," announced the T. T. in tones so stentorian that every be-

spavined and be-rheumatised votary of Turkish bathdom awoke with a strenuous start.

The black trunked rubber ignored the request with an immense disdain. Thereupon the T. T. repeated the demand with reinforced vociferation. When the second demand was met with elaborate silence the T. T. hurled his baritone with renewed emphasis and with a huskiness which would have intimidated a Polar bear. "What kind of a house is this," he thundered, "where a man can't get what he orders. I now demand this drink."

Again an extensive creaking of rheumatic bones as the patients turned over uneasily, and an attenuation of eloquent silence on the part of the rubber.

The T. T. then announced, to the delectation of the proprietors of the creaking bones, that he had plenty of money, and when this was met with a bleak silence, resorted to a new line of effort, as the harrassing thirst attacking him assumed a malevolent severity.

"Do you know, old man," he proceeded, "that I have been in Turkish baths in Chicago and New York and in every other city where Turkish baths are supposed to be run right, but I never met the equal of this. Ah, bring me a little drink, old man. What, not yet? Say, rubber, my boy, you are one of the finest specimens of physical manhood I ever saw. You're an Adonis, you're—well, say, old chap, I never saw a handsomer man than you in all my life. Ah, just bring me a quiet little drink, Senator."

Huge groans and anathemas from the spavined and rheumatized, whose slumbers, by virtue of the foregoing dialogue, had been disturbed for two hours.

"Now, old man, do you see what you have done?" resumed the T. T. "I promise never to say another word if you will pass me a little drink

—money in my pocket. Why, do you know, I wouldn't disturb these gentlemen for anything in the world? Just a little whisky, Adonis."

By this time the murmurs of the halt and blind had reached an orchestral volume which would have made the Royal Italian band quiver with envy. As the T. T., oblivious to vituperative epithets, was about to return to the broken chain of his persuasive eloquence, two rheumatic citizens hobbled toward the orator.

"Ah, there they are," shouted the T. T., just as the two halt ones were about to obliterate him from the Sanitarium map. "My friends, I might say my guests. Say, Adonis, just change that order. Make it three drinks instead of one. My guests are both thirsty. Gentlemen, I can see the bibulous and thirsty fever projected upon your thirsty visages. Three large ones, old man. My guests look like three hundred acres of desert. (Still a majestic silence in the poise of the rubber.) Do you know, rubber, this means \$5 to you? Plenty of money in the other room, inside pocket, find it. Did I say five? Fifteen dollars for three drinks."

"Give him the booze! Blankety blank! Arsenic! Blue vitriol! Kill the Rube. Hypo him with green paint." All this came from the tired and unattired and rheumatic-tired habitues of the spavined department.

Thereupon three drinks were produced. The two cripples who had come to chide remained to imbibe. And as he quaffed the net result of two hours of strenuous eloquence, there came over the visage of the T. T. a smile so ineffable that had they witnessed it they would have magnanimously have forgiven the T. T.—even as the white robed angels. Which they were not.

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